




FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

M E M O R A N D U M



TO: Chairman and Members
Park Authority Board

VIA: Michael A. Kane, Director 

FROM: Cindy Messinger, Director
Resource Management Division

DATE: July 20, 2006

Agenda

Resource Management Committee
Wednesday, July 26, 2006 – 3:45 p.m.
Board Room – Herrity Building
Chairman: Frank S. Vajda

1. FY 2007 Annual Deer Management Program – Action*
2. Cultural Resource Management Plan First Year Implementation Plan – Information*
3. Natural Resource Management Plan Update and Implementation Plan – Information*

*Enclosures

cc: Timothy K. White
Leadership Team

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ACTION -

FY 2007 Deer Management Program

ISSUE:

Park Authority Board approval of the FY 2007 Deer Management Program proposed by the County Wildlife Biologist.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Park Authority Director recommends approval of the FY 2007 Deer Management Program proposed by the County Wildlife Biologist.

TIMING:

Board action is requested on September 13, 2006 in order to implement the program.

BACKGROUND:

The Park Authority has been participating in the Fairfax County deer herd management program since 1998. The Park Authority Board has annually approved a deer management program proposed by staff in cooperation with the County Wildlife Biologist. The most recent deer herd management activities occurred between September 1, 2005, and March 31, 2006, in conjunction with permits held by the Fairfax County Police Department's Animal Control Division.

Deer management activities approved by the Park Authority Board for the past year included sharpshooting events at up to 18 parks, archery hunts at up to seven parks, managed hunts at two parks, and continued field research to assess deer population levels and deer damage at multiple park sites.

Due to staffing shortages in the County Wildlife Biologist office, and the inability to bait deer due to changes to state law, deer herd reductions continue to be limited. In the 2006 permit season, 12 herd reduction events were held at six park sites with 124 deer removed. In the 2005 permit season, 11 events were held at three park sites with 40 deer removed.

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The 2006 breakdown of shooting events and deer taken was as follows:

| Park | Method | No. of Events | Deer Taken |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Clark's Crossing | Sharpshooting | 1 | 18 |
| Ellanor C. Lawrence | Sharpshooting | 2 | 8 |
| Huntley Meadows | Sharpshooting | 4 | 25 |
| Riverbend | Sharpshooting | 1 | 2 |
| Sully Historic Site | Sharpshooting | 2 | 2 |
| Sully Woodlands | Managed Hunts | 2 | 69 |
| Total: | | 12 | 124 |

The Park Authority conducts direct mailings of notification letters to property owners adjacent to parks where deer herd management activities are going to occur in the first year of activity. Mailings were sent out during the 2005 permit season for Laurel Hill, Clark's Crossing and Sully Woodlands. No new notifications were sent out during the 2006 permit season. However, herd reduction events were held at Clark's Crossing and Sully Woodlands for the first time with good success. Prior to each shooting event, staff consulted with the local Park Authority Board member. Feedback from citizens in regards to deer herd management on park land was overwhelmingly supportive.

During the 2006 permit season, staff worked to standardize site deer herd management plans. The County Wildlife Biologist is also exploring opportunities for year-round herd management in order to more fully address the population problem.

Due to staffing shortages in the County Wildlife Biologist office, herd management was not conducted at several parks that show great need and for which there is public support. The focus during the FY 2007 season will be to go into parks where herd management has been ongoing or where there has not been management previously but where there is a documented need. Deer management activities approved by the Park Authority Board will only be implemented after detailed staff research and planning are completed to ensure safety and effectiveness.

The County Wildlife Biologist's recommended deer herd management sites for FY 2007 are presented in Attachment 1. The proposed list includes all of the sites approved for FY 2006 and adds one site: Marie Butler Levin Preserve. Deer herbivore activity at this site has increased significantly and is hampering efforts to establish a healthy native plant population in support of the overall goal of establishing the site as a native plant arboretum.

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While refinements in communication and scheduling procedures continue, staff believes the program is working effectively. Use of the Police Department's Tactical Squad as sharpshooters for safe and effective deer removal is now routine. In addition, Park Authority staff has continued to track wildlife complaints including deer damage complaints.

Deer population research will remain a focal point of the deer herd management program and will be conducted prior to herd control activities being conducted at a given location. The primary method used to estimate population is based on calculations comparing individuals captured in images at infra-red motioned triggered camera stations. The current Fairfax County goal for maximum deer density in forest habitats is 15 per square mile.

FISCAL IMPACT:

All deer herd management will be conducted with existing Park Authority, Police Department and Facilities Management Division staff and equipment.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENT:

Attachment 1: FY 2007 FCPA Deer Management Sites (Matrix)

STAFF:

Michael A Kane, Director
Timothy K. White, Chief Operating Officer
Cindy Messinger, Director, Resource Management Division
Charles Bittenbring, Director, Park Services Division
Todd Johnson, Director, Park Operations Division
Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer

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| FY 2007 FCPA Deer Management Sites* | | | | |
|--|----------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Park | Acreage | Problem Indicator(s) | Research | Methods |
| Clark's Cross/Tamarack | 163 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| Colvin Run SV | 71 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: IR Camera Census | Archery Sharpshooting |
| Cub Run SV | 825 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: Accident Study, IR Camera Census | Archery Sharpshooting |
| Difficult Run SV | 863 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: IR Camera Census | Archery Sharpshooting |
| Eakin Park | 57 | Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| Ellanor C. Lawrence Park | 670 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: Spotlight Survey Accident Study, IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| Fox Mill | 209 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Planned: IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| Huntley Meadows | 1425 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: Spotlight Survey, Browse Survey, Tick Survey, IR Camera Census | Archery Managed Hunts Sharpshooting |
| Lake Accotink | 480 | Public Health Environmental Damage | Done: IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| Lake Fairfax | 479 | Public Health Environmental Damage | Planned: Browse Survey & other indirect methods | Sharpshooting |
| Laurel Hill | 835 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: Visual Count Planned: IR Camera Census | Archery Sharpshooting |
| Marie Butler Levin Preserve | 20 | Environmental Damage | Initial field survey for browse impacts | Sharpshooting |
| Riverbend | 418 | Environmental Damage | Done: Spotlight Census Repeat: IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| Scotts Run | 384 | Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: Accident Study Planned: IR Camera Census | Archery Sharpshooting |
| South Run SV | 363 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Planned: IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |

| Park | Acreage | Problem Indicator(s) | Research | Methods |
|--|----------------|--|--|---|
| Sully Historic Site | 62 | Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| Sully Woodlands (in part: Hunter, Hacor, Horne, Stephens, BOS Transfer Properties) | 1421 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: Aerial Survey, visual survey Planned: IR Camera Census | Archery Managed Hunts Sharpshooting |
| Wakefield | 293 | Public Health Public Safety Environmental Damage | Done: Accident Survey, IR Camera Census | Sharpshooting |
| *Note: one site added for 2007 - Marie Butler Levin Preserve | | | | |

INFORMATION -

Cultural Resource Management Plan - First Year Implementation Plan

On April 26, 2006, the Park Authority Board approved the Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). The Plan presents an approach to the Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section's mandate to direct the management and protection of cultural resources both on parkland and county-wide.

The discussion at the July 26, 2006 Resource Management Committee meeting will include:

- 1) An overview of the Cultural Resource Management Plan.
 - The plan identifies issues in 11 topic areas and 220 strategies. The 11 topic areas include: cultural resource planning; archaeology; Civil War Sites; archaeological artifacts and collections; historic buildings, structures, objects and traditional cultural properties; historic overlay districts; listings; cemeteries; cultural landscapes; human impact on cultural resources; and education.
- 2) Discussion of the first year implementation plan.
 - This plan assumes no additional funding for FY 2007. Existing Cultural Resource staff, as well as volunteers, other agency staff, county staff and partner organizations, will be responsible for implementation. Areas of emphasis for FY 2007 include strategies related to Policy and Practices, Partnerships, Education and GIS.
- 3) Discussion of potential challenges to be faced in FY 2007.
 - Insufficient staffing and funding will limit implementation of the CRMP. The plan calls for partnering opportunities and use of volunteers; however, there are strategies in the plan that will not be able to be accomplished without additional funding.

Sixty-four of the 78 strategies proposed for first year implementation are in process to some extent. These include evergreen activities including development plan review and cultural landscape reports, as well as formalizing of existing procedures such as the development of guidelines for archaeology. Additionally, Cultural Resource staff is moving forward with educational initiatives including updating the webpage and the development of a brochure.

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Four of the 78 strategies have been completed. Completed projects include the digitizing and georeferencing of historic aerial photographs; development of a matrix of National Register eligible and listed archaeological resources; a survey of historic buildings, structures and objects on parkland; and the update of the cemetery layer on GIS.

Further implementation of the CRMP will:

- Formalize and/or establish policies and practices needed to preserve and protect cultural resources on parkland and county-wide;
- Document cultural resources ;
- Establish partnerships with other agency and county staff, volunteers and other interested citizens for education and resource stewardship purposes; and
- Ensure that cultural resource protection is an integral component of all planning, development and management activities.

Unless otherwise directed, staff will proceed with the strategies presented in the first year implementation plan.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

Attachment 1: First Year Implementation Highlights

STAFF:

Michael A. Kane, Director

Timothy K. White, Chief Operating Officer

Lynn S. Tadlock, Director, Planning and Development Division

Todd Johnson, Director, Park Operations Division

Miriam Morrison, Director, Administration Division

Charlie Bittenbring, Director, Park Services Division

Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer

Cindy Messinger, Director, Resource Management Division

Michael Rierson, Manager, Resource Stewardship Branch

Liz Crowell, Manager, Cultural Resource Management Section

First Year Implementation Highlights

Policy and Practices

- Examine existing policies, procedures and practices relating to cultural resource identification, evaluation, documentation, interpretation and management.
- Formalize existing practices through the development of guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures, where needed.

Partnerships

- Continue to expand partnerships within the Park Authority, as well as with the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), the Fairfax County History Commission, the Fairfax County Architectural Review Board, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, other municipal cultural resource professionals, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), Virginia State Parks, National Park Service, and others.
- Identify other agencies and organizations to target for potential partnership opportunities.

Cultural Resource Studies (Cultural Landscape Reports/Historic Structures Reports/Cemetery Studies/Archaeological Studies)

- Conduct cultural resource studies, as needed, to support the planned development/master plans on parkland.
- Conduct archaeological projects county-wide where sites are threatened, using staff, volunteers, and/or partners.

Cultural Resource Planning

- Continue to evaluate cultural resources on land under consideration for acquisition and during master planning and development.
- Continue to conduct development plan review for properties county-wide.
- Continue to work with Planning and Development Division and DPZ to improve the process for the review of archaeological sites and to develop archaeological proffers.

Human Impact on Cultural Resources

- Develop programs, practices and materials with the goal of protecting cultural resources.

Education

- Continue the work of the Stewardship Education Team to develop a basic introduction to cultural resources to be provided to Park Authority employees and the public.
- Use existing funding to develop a Cultural Resource brochure, and explore funding for additional brochures.
- Develop a cultural resource webpage.

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INFORMATION -

Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) Update and Implementation Plan

On January 14, 2004, the Park Authority Board approved the first ever agency-wide Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP). This plan serves as the agency's guide to meeting our responsibilities for preservation and management of natural resources on parkland. Staff has since implemented the first and second years (FY 2005 and FY 2006) of the plan and developed a plan for the third year (FY 2007).

The discussion at the July 26, 2006 Resource Management Committee meeting will include:

- 1) An overview of the NRMP.
 - The NRMP contains seven elements and 111 strategies. The seven elements are: Natural Resource Management Planning, Vegetation, Wildlife, Water Resources, Air Quality, Human Impact on Parklands, and Education.
- 2) Discussion of the implementation plan for the NRMP including a report on accomplishments in FY2006 and plans for FY 2007.
 - The FY 2006 plan did not involve additional funds; the existing three-person NRMP section staff, as well as site and other agency staff, were responsible for implementation. Work was accomplished on 85 of 111 strategies. Areas of emphasis for FY 2006 included strategies related to Education, Policy, Partnerships, Low Impact Development, and GIS.
 - The FY 2007 Implementation Plan assumes no additional funds for FY 2007. Areas of emphasis for FY 2007 include strategies related to Education, Policy and Practices, Partnerships, Education and GIS.
- 3) Challenges and implications for the Park Authority if new funding is not assigned for the implementation of the NRMP.
 - Insufficient staffing and funding will continue to limit implementation of the NRMP. Two years into implementation, we are doing everything we can – making changes to policy and practices, educating staff and residents, and asking staff to help where they can. We are now at a critical stage in which we can not continue to make significant progress without additional staff and funding. Our natural capital is degrading and if we do not act, our forests may not regenerate, our water and air will continue to degrade,

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and our residents will no longer be able to enjoy the beauty of these areas.

The second year of the implementation of the NRMP was a success. Staff accomplished the majority of what they set out to do and secured \$260,000 in funding. Next year, staff will continue to focus on education, policy and practices and partnerships and will continue to seek funding.

Looking ahead, implementation of the NRMP will:

- Arm us with the information, policies and practices needed to preserve and protect what little natural areas remain;
- Engage and educate staff and citizens in resource stewardship; and
- Integrate resource protection into all of our planning, development and management activities.

Unless otherwise directed, staff will proceed with the strategies presented in the FY 2007 implementation plan.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS:

Attachment 1: FY 2006 Accomplishments and FY 2007 Plans for key thematic areas

STAFF:

Michael A. Kane, Director

Timothy K. White, Chief Operating Officer

Lynn S. Tadlock, Director, Planning and Development Division

Todd Johnson, Director, Park Operations Division

Miriam Morrison, Director, Administration Division

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Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer

Cindy Messinger, Director, Resource Management Division

Michael Rierson, Manager, Resource Stewardship Branch

Heather Schinkel, Manager, Natural Resource Management Section

FY 2006 Accomplishments and FY 2007 Plans for key thematic areas

Policy

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- Developed draft policy language on native plants and the planting, cultivation and removal of invasive plants on parkland.
- Developed a draft stormwater features policy to set up criteria for evaluation of proposed stormwater features on parkland (revisions to Park Authority Policy 304 governing regional storm ponds).
- Began to list and document best practices for resource protection and management to be formalized in future years.
- Established an inter-division team that reviewed the current policies and standard operating procedures related to beaver management.

FY 2007 Plans

- Continue to look at Park Authority policies and practices and how resource protection is and should be incorporated in activities.
- Finalize policy language on native plants and the planting, cultivation and removal of invasive plants on parkland.
- Finalize stormwater features policy.
- Finalize any needed clarifications to beaver management procedures.

Partnerships

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- Continued partnerships with a number of organizations including the Environmental Coordinating Committee (ECC), Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC), Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD), Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), Earth Sangha, and many others.
- On September 19, 2005, Chairman Strickland and staff presented on Park Authority Stewardship and the Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) at the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee meeting.
- Partnered (through the Invasive Management Area program) with the NVSWCD Neighborhood Ecological Stewardship Program (NEST) for support and training.
- Continued to work closely with the ECC. NRMP staff continued to participate in a committee to develop an Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) to implement the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Agenda.
- Held a joint Park Authority Board and EQAC meeting on February 8, 2006.
- Continued to partner with Earth Sangha on a number of projects including the creation of a native arboretum at Marie Butler Leven Preserve.

FY 2007 Plans

- Continue and expand partnerships including those with ECC, EQAC, DPWES, NVSWCD, VDOF and many others.

NRMP Program

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- Sought funding through a variety of sources and secured \$100,000 for invasives and \$160,000 for trail mapping at FY 2005 Carryover in support of the Board of Supervisor's Environmental Agenda.
- Continued to refine NRMP Section operations plan including roles and responsibilities for NRMP Section staff.
- Planned the out-years implementation of the NRMP.
- Heather Schinkel, along with Cindy Messinger and Charles Smith, presented on Park Authority Stewardship, the NRMP Section roles and the Natural Resource Management Plan at the September 9, 2005 Green Breakfast.

FY 2007 Plans

- Continue to develop NRMP Section operations plan including roles and responsibilities for NRMP Section staff.
- Continue to plan the out-years implementation of the NRMP.
- Continue to seek funding through general and bond funds.

Resource Assessments and Planning

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- Continued to evaluate resources on land under consideration for acquisition and during master planning and development.
- Began developing scope of work for a Resource Assessment project which will include a suite of inventory and management plan tools based upon the best available methodology and customized to Park Authority needs and business practices.
- Completed draft of the Sully Woodlands Regional Master Plan, the first of its kind to have a regional and resource driven approach.
- Continued to evaluate green infrastructure modeling efforts including working with Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments on regional efforts.
- Staff will attend the annual GIS user conference in August, 2006.
- Worked with Park Operation Division on development of Tririga and coordination with resource management and park management efforts.
- Developed scope for natural resource inventory data development as part of the GIS carryover project.
- Working on a county Tree Action Plan team with internal and external members to develop an implementation plan for the Tree Commission's Tree Action Plan.

FY 2007 Plans

- Continue to evaluate resources on land under consideration for acquisition and during master planning and development.
- Initiate the Resource Assessment project.
- Refine the Green Infrastructure Model as appropriate.
- Continue to assess needs and develop a Park Authority GIS Strategy.
- Implement the BOS Environmental Agenda GIS carryover project.
- Continue to work on county Tree Action Plan team to develop an implementation plan for the Tree Commission's Tree Action Plan.

Resource Management

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- POD area crews and NRMP worked closely to address resource management issues (without dedicated funding and staff continues to be mostly reactionary).
- Park Authority staff conducted a burn of the meadows on Pleasant Valley Road in Sully Woodlands in February 2006.
- Worked on Natural Landscaping Committee and developed plans for reduced mowing and natural meadow establishment.
- Initiated trail mapping project (funding secured for trail mapping at FY 2005 Carryover in support of the Board of Supervisor's Environmental Agenda).

FY 2007 Plans

- Resource management will not occur other than through existing staff and area crews and partnerships.
- Continue to work on Natural Landscape Committee to further implement initiatives.
- Implement the trail mapping carryover project.

Invasive Non-native Species

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- Created a pilot volunteer program that will test a new model for volunteer resource management and draw attention to this serious threat to natural areas (funded with \$100,000 for invasives received at FY 2005 Carryover in support of the Board of Supervisor's Environmental Agenda). This Invasive Management Area (IMA) program will enable residents to learn about invasive species, remove invasive species, and replant native species on parkland.
- Developed brochures and web content on invasives and conducted training for the public and staff.
- Sought funding for invasive non-natives through regular budget process, carryover and grants (received \$100,000 at FY 2005 Carryover).

- Presented on invasive non-native plants and the IMA program at the June 2006 Tree Commission meeting.

FY 2007 Plans

- Complete the IMA pilot program and evaluate program and ecological impacts.
- Continue to seek funding for invasive non-native plant management.
- Seek support for management through partnerships.

Water Resources

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- Park Authority staff continued to work with DPWES staff to refine the process of reviewing, coordinating and implementing watershed plan projects.
- A baseline inventory of stormwater features was completed in coordination with the Park Operations Division, the Planning and Development Division and DPWES.
- In response to the increased pressure to locate stormwater features on park land in part because of the County's watershed planning process, Park Authority staff began the review and revision of Park Authority Policy 304 governing regional storm ponds.
- Continued implementation of LID demonstration projects (funded at FY 2004 carryover in support of the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Agenda). Five sites were selected to have LID demonstration projects (as funding allows) including Cub Run RECenter, Mt. Vernon RECenter, Audrey Moore RECenter, South Run District Park and Greendale Golf Course and design is underway with construction anticipated in FY 2007.
- LID is considered for each new Park Authority development project and options are presented to the Park Authority Board.

FY 2007 Plans

- Continue to partner with DPWES in watershed planning and stormwater management.
- Continue to explore LID and work to incorporate in Park Authority practices.
- Install the LID demonstration projects and develop interpretive signage.

Education

FY 2006 Accomplishments

- Expanded the content on the Park Authority website including a new Nature Pages component.
- As part of the Stewardship Education project funded by the Board of Supervisors at FY 2004 carryover in support of the Environmental Agenda, six stewardship brochures have been published including

"Treasures," "Wildlife," "Invasive Backyard Plants," "Invasive Forest Plants," "Trees" and "Spiders, Snakes and Slime Molds." The first two Highway Cards ("Trees" and "Canada Geese") were published.

- Two posters were developed with the theme "Preserving Fairfax County Treasures for Today and for the Future."
- New interpretive waysides were developed for the cross county trail that focus on natural resource stewardship topics.
- The Stewardship Education Team (SET) finalized the content of Stewardship Basics, a primer on stewardship for all Park Authority employees. In addition, SET team members visited each work unit and site to conduct a stewardship awareness exercise. Team members also developed a stewardship component (a hands-on activity and a presentation) for new employee orientation.

FY 2007 Plans

- Continue the work of SET including distribution of the Stewardship Basics publication to all employees.
- Continue to develop the stewardship brochures series.
- Continue to update and expand information available on website and Nature Pages.